Azim Premji University is a not for profit, autonomous university, established under the Azim Premji University Act 2010 of the Karnataka Legislature. It has a clear social purpose of working towards a just, humane, equitable and sustainable society. The Azim Premji Foundation is the sponsor of the University.

The roots of Azim Premji University lie in the learning and experience of a decade of work in school education by Azim Premji Foundation. The University is one of the Foundation’s key responses to the challenges confronting the education and development sectors in India.

The University is focused on developing new talent, building capacity in existing functionaries and creating domain knowledge in the fields of education and development through its degree programmes, continuing education and research activities. The University started in 2011, offering post graduate programmes in Education and Development. 198 students have graduated in the past two years, with 75% of them working in the social sector, reflecting the social purpose of the University. The University currently has 550 students on campus. The faculty strength at the University has now grown to over 100, with a rich mix of academic and field experience.

### Degree Programmes of the University

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programmes</th>
<th>Duration</th>
<th>Eligibility</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Master of Arts in Education</strong></td>
<td>2 years</td>
<td>1. Bachelor’s Degree (including Physical Sciences, Social Sciences, Humanities, Engineering, Medicine, Agriculture, Environmental Sciences, Commerce, Management, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Specializations*</td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Candidates with work experience are actively encouraged to apply</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. School Organization, Leadership and Management</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Curriculum and Pedagogy</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Master of Arts in Development</strong></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Specializations*</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Livelihood</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Public Policy</td>
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<td>3. Health and Nutrition</td>
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<td>4. Law and Governance</td>
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<td>5. Sustainability</td>
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The programmes are academically rigorous and the curriculum comprises a set of essential courses in the first two semesters and electives in the third and fourth semesters. Students have an option of over 60 elective courses to choose from. Field practice is an integral component of the programme and students spend 16 weeks in field work, beginning with exposure visits and moving on to engage in internships and independent field projects. The
assessments systems are comprehensive; term papers, class projects, presentations, book reviews, reflection papers and exams are part of the overall assessment scheme. The University follows a letter grade system and non-competitive grading that does not compare students.

Supporting students from diverse backgrounds

The social purpose of the Azim Premji University is reflected in its activities and programmes on three dimensions: (a) developing thoughtful, action oriented professionals in education and development domains (b) high quality research to create a knowledge base to address India’s challenges in education and development and (c) capacity enhancement efforts for in-service professionals including Government functionaries in relevant domains.

1. Facilitating and supporting the education of students from diverse socio-economic backgrounds

The University strives to create an exceptional learning environment and prepare outstanding professionals for fulfilling careers as social change leaders. The culture and processes at the University are designed to attract socially committed students and providing them with significant academic, financial and other support to enable them realise their full potential. The University began with the launch of two Post-Graduate programmes: Master of Arts in Education and Master of Arts in Development with a few select specializations. 198 students have graduated in 2011 and 2012. On campus during Academic year 2014-15, we have 226 students of the 2013 batch and 321 students from the 2014 batch.

a. Diversity and Inclusion in Admission: We are committed to helping students from various backgrounds overcome a range of economic, social and language/communication barriers and encourage them to pursue higher education. We reach out across the country (28 test centres and 15 interview locations) during admissions. We provide extensive financial and other institutional support to all deserving students who are selected. Students from socially and economically disadvantaged backgrounds are given specific weightage in the admission process, enabling them to offset possible entry level difficulties.

b. Fees and Scholarship: The tuition fee structure for the two Masters programmes has been kept at Rs. 53,000 per annum. This fee is all-inclusive i.e. there is no additional “examination fee”, “library fee” etc. The University extends scholarships to help students cover their tuition fees as well as expenses for accommodation and food. Over 50% or 270 students have been provided with 50 % scholarships and some with 100 % thus enabling them access high quality post graduate education at an affordable cost.

c. Financial Assistance in addition to scholarship: (i) Students from deeply disadvantaged economic backgrounds are provided with monthly assistance of Rs. 2,000 per month to meet their day to day expenses (ii) assistantships up to Rs. 10,000 per month for family support provided to working professionals and (iii) advance employment offer from Azim Premji Foundation at the time of joining the degree programme. Our experience suggests that such support encourages students to pursue higher education successfully.

d. Education Loan: The University has arranged concessional educational loans for students as well. This is further supported by providing loan repayment support for students who join the social sector. 180 students avail of this facility.

e. Technology support: All students are provided with laptops, internet connectivity at campus and accommodation premises.

2. Our student profile reflects our commitment to social diversity

- 50% of our students come from either rural areas or small towns
- 50% of our students are women
- 33% of the 2014 batch students are from non-English medium backgrounds
- Over 30 % of students come with more than 2 years work experience

3. Ongoing academic support for students

a. A special programme called “Pathways” was introduced in 2014 for about 90 students from disadvantaged backgrounds, to help them build confidence in the new environment and develop English language reading, writing and other academic skills to enable their smooth entry into the programme.

b. Orientation: All students go through a three week orientation programme immediately upon admission, to prepare them for their study at the university. This programme acquaints students with several crucial aspects of living and studying at our university: Belonging in a Student Community; Navigating Classroom Diversity; Introduction to Social Sciences; Quantitative Skills; Computing Skills; Group work and workshops on Prevention of Sexual Harassment.

c. Mentoring: Every student is assigned an individual faculty mentor to provide them guidance right from the start of their studies through completion.
4. Faculty:

In a brief span of two years, the faculty strength at the University has grown to over 100. Our faculty resonate deeply with the social commitment of the University and see a significant opportunity to contribute towards social change. The students also benefit significantly from access to the wealth of experience of Azim Premji Foundation’s field institutions and their practice related expertise. Our attempt to integrate theory, practice and research is important for any institution of higher education.

5. Resource creation:

**Library:** The University library houses a collection of 26,000 books and subscribes to several online and print journals and databases.

**Resource Development:** The University has created substantial teaching and learning resources and made them freely and widely accessible through its magazines and online portals. More than 5,000 resources are available on our portal and 25,000 people access these on a monthly basis, most of whom are practicing teachers. Our magazines, “At Right Angles”, “Learning Curve” and “Language and Language Teaching” are distributed free to over 2000 teachers, students and others. Importantly, these materials are translated into Kannada, Hindi and other regional languages serving a significant national need for high quality resources in Indian languages.

6. Research and continuing education:

The University is engaged in several research projects, in areas like Early childhood education, Education leadership, Health & Nutrition, and Law & Governance. It has already conducted more than fifty capacity enhancement programmes in education perspectives, leadership, livelihoods, and public policy for government functionaries. In addition several faculty members work closely with the Foundation field teams in designing and delivering capacity enhancement programmes for educational functionaries. The University has Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) with national and state capacity development institutions, actively collaborating to develop capacity enhancement frameworks for Government functionaries in leadership positions.

7. Vibrant academic discourse:

a. Four international seminars in the areas on “Philosophy of Education” and “Law and Governance” have been conducted, providing a platform for national and international scholars to present their work and share their knowledge.

b. The Azim Premji University Public lecture series, weekly colloquiums and youth engagement programmes across the country have been very successful in creating and sustaining an ongoing dialogue around key social issues. We have been able to reach thousands of people through these efforts.

c. MANTHAN, is our annual research conference, and the third conference was in August 2014. Its unique feature is its ability to bring field practitioners and academics to a common research platform. More than 50 research papers, mostly from field locations were presented and panel discussions organized.

d. We have undertaken special initiatives in the areas of Philosophy of Education, Law, Governance and Development, Livelihoods, and Work and Education. These initiatives focus on building deep understanding and domain depth in chosen areas addressing teaching programmes, practice and research in these areas.
Our Work in Karnataka

Azim Premji Foundation has been working very closely with the Government of Karnataka since 2000 in its programmes related to enrolment, attendance and the improvement of quality in elementary schools. More specifically these included large scale programmes like the Learning Guarantee programme, Child Friendly School Initiative etc. across 46 blocks of 7 most disadvantaged districts of North East Karnataka. These involved teacher professional development, school leadership development, capacity enhancement of education functionaries; computer aided learning to enrich pedagogical experiences. The collaborative work with the Government is governed by the MoUs that the Foundation entered into with the State Government from time to time. Illustratively, our latest MOU with the Karnataka government was signed in December 2012 and the broad areas of work in Karnataka over the next few years are as follows

• The Foundation currently has a 200 people team in Karnataka with a State Institute in Bengaluru, and District Institutes in Yadgir, Mandya and Gulbarga, engaging with the government school system. It has planned to launch six more district institutes in north east Karnataka.

• Collaborative work with the Government of Karnataka to strengthen the State Institute of School Leadership, Educational Planning and Management (SISLEP), Dharwad. In the longer term several ongoing initiatives within the Educational leadership and Management area at the district, block and cluster level will be integrated with the work of SISLEP.

• Teacher Education programmes, both in–service and pre–service, working with the District Institutes of Education Training (DIETs) and Directorate of School education Research and Training (DSERT)

The Foundation is also collaborating with the state governments of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Puducherry, Rajasthan and Uttarakhand. By 2017, the Foundation will have its presence in eight states with a State Institute in their capital cities, 50 District Institutes and 30 schools located at District Headquarters and over 4000 employees.

The Road Map Ahead

a. Launch of Undergraduate Programmes: We have identified Teacher Education and Undergraduate programmes as a key requirement in the country and have created a dedicated team to prepare and offer Undergraduate Programmes, starting from the Academic Year 2015. The Undergraduate programme will follow a truly innovative curriculum, with a strong foundational focus, a specific India studies component and will offer Majors in Politics, Economics, Physics, Biology and Integrated Humanities. This range will be expanded in the coming years.

b. Expansion of Masters Programmes: In line with our framework for new programmes, we are expanding our programme offerings.

- Two new Masters programmes are being planned and preparations are on for these new programmes - M.A. Public Policy and Governance (2015) and a Masters Programme in Sustainability (2016/17).

- We currently offer five specializations- 'Curriculum and Pedagogy' and “School Organization, Leadership and Management for the Education students and “Public Policy”, “Law and Governance” and ‘Health and Nutrition’ for the Development students. From the next academic year we plan to offer a few more specializations e.g. in Sustainability, Early Childhood Education, Livelihoods.

c. Certificate Programmes: A dedicated team is working on short term certificate/PG Diploma courses, expanding the range of offerings and preparing for distance education programmes

d. Our new 80 acre campus with about 2.6 million square feet is likely to be ready by 2017/18. The campus will offer full–fledged academic and residential facilities for students and faculty. The University currently operates in leased premises of over 1 lakh square feet.

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